Regional Healthcare Coordination Center

MUTUAL AID POLICY

Updated: June 2019

Table of Contents

Version History

Version Number	Date Revised	Revised By	Summary of Changes
1003.2	7/18/2019	Christopher Cook	Grammatical errors corrected on pg.7
1003.1	7/10/19	RHCC Workgroup	Added footnotes on page 6 to include logistical support assumptions. Contact Appendix changed to reference VHASS.
1003.0	5/29/19	Christopher Cook	Outlined 3 policy scenarios. Procedures changed to meet 3 scenarios. Format of each scenario policy changed to 1-page table format. Added appendixes.
1002.5	5/28/2019	RHCC Workgroup	
1002.0	12/5/2018	RHCC Workgroup	Initial policy revision updated for relevancy

Regional Healthcare Coordination Centers
Mutual Aid Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for the request and provision of mutual aid assistance between or among Regional Healthcare Coordination Centers (RHCCs).

Policy

The policy of the Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program is to ensure continuity of RHCC functionality across all six (6) Healthcare Coalition regions covering Virginia.

Scope

This policy applies to all RHCCs in Virginia that are funded through the Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management program as a part of the federal Hospital Preparedness Program. The term RHCC is inclusive of personnel and non-personnel resources.

Responsibilities

The RHCC Managers are responsible for maintaining situational awareness of their region and requesting assistance through this policy when necessary.

The respective Regional Healthcare Coordinators are responsible for overseeing activities in the region. The VDH State Hospital Coordinator and the VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness will oversee the statewide implementation of this policy and its use.

Remuneration

Assistance provided from one RHCC to another RHCC as part of this policy should generally be regarded as "in-kind."

Disposable, damaged, or lost supplies or equipment shall be replaced with a similar or like product after the Recovery phase of the incident is complete.

In cases where monetary reimbursement may or will be requested, the VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness or VDH State Hospital Coordinator must be contacted for approval prior to accepting the assistance.

In the event monetary issues preclude the above-required replacement standard, an agreement shall be made in writing between involved regions. VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness shall review and approve any such agreement prior to execution. Upon execution, the agreement shall be considered binding.

Request Scenarios

Requests for RHCC resources shall generally be divided into 3 scenarios:

1. **Single Region Event:** An event which is only affecting a single region without potential for expansion into other regions.
   a. **Resource Availability Known:** A situation where one or more facilities in a region needs a single resource item or category known to exist in another region.

      Example: Hospital "A" needs a trailer-mounted generator due to power outages. The RHCC in that hospital's region knows this resource exists in another specific RHCC region.

   b. **Resource Availability Unknown:** A situation where one or more facilities within a single region need resources, but those resources' existence or availability in other regions is not known.

      Example: Hospital "A" and Hospital "B" need "x" supply due to a major event, but its existence at other RHCC warehouses is unknown.

2. **Multi-Region:** A situation where facilities across multiple healthcare regions are affected by a major event.

      Example: A large hurricane passing across Virginia with multiple areas impacted.

Request Procedures

Requests for assistance may be made by multiple means, i.e. phone call, e-mail, etc. However, prior to any movement of resources, requests must be entered into the Virginia Healthcare Alerting and Status System (VHASS) by the impacted RHCC unless a technological failure prevents entry into VHASS.

1. If an event has not yet been created, create a new event in the VHASS Event Module.
2. The impacted RHCC will notify the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) State Hospital Coordinator and the VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness as part of this request.

Requests may include personnel, equipment, and/or supplies.

Request Process

Single Region Event		Multi-Region Event
Resource Availability Known	**Resource Availability Unknown**	
❑ Impacted RHCC directly contacts Assisting RHCC with specific request and estimated timeframe for needs. ❑ Assisting RHCC Coordinator reviews request and determines if resource need can be met and if appropriate approves request. ❑ Impacted and Assisting RHCCs shall coordinate logistics of resource transfers.[1] ❑ Assisting RHCC notifies VDH Hospital Coordinator and VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness of resource transfer. ❑ Impacted RHCC enters notes into VHASS event of equipment transfer into VHASS Statewide Event Log.	❑ Impacted RHCC expands VHASS Event to now include ALL regions (if not already done) and enters a request for resource(s) in VHASS on the Statewide RHCC Event log. ❑ Impacted RHCC sends a VHASS alert to other RHCC region recipients as to the posted needs. ❑ Other RHCC regions acknowledge receipt of the alert in the Statewide RHCC Event Log. ❑ Assisting RHCC Coordinator reviews request and determines if resource need can be met and if appropriate approves request. ❑ The RHCCs able to meet all or part of the requested needs shall follow-up with the Impacted RHCC directly. ❑ Impacted and Assisting RHCCs shall coordinate logistics of resource transfers.[1] ❑ Assisting RHCC notifies VDH Hospital Coordinator and VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness of resource transfer. ❑ Impacted RHCC enters notes into VHASS event of equipment transfer into VHASS Statewide Event Log. ❑ Once Impacted RHCC needs have been met, the Statewide RHCC Event Log shall be updated with statement that needs have been met to avoid duplication of efforts.	❑ Impacted RHCC expands VHASS Event to now include ALL regions (if not already done) and enters a request for resource(s) in VHASS on the Statewide RHCC Event Log. ❑ Impacted RHCC sends a VHASS alert to other RHCC region recipients as to the posted needs. ❑ Other RHCC regions acknowledge receipt of the alert in the Statewide RHCC Event Log. ❑ Assisting RHCC Coordinators review request and determines if resource needs can be met, and if appropriate approves resources to be offered. ❑ Assisting RHCCs enter resource availability into Statewide RHCC Event Log. ❑ VDH Hospital Coordinator or VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness make determination of location and quantity of resources to be released to the Impacted RHCC based on posted availability. ❑ Impacted and Assisting RHCCs shall coordinate logistics of resource transfers.[2] ❑ Once Impacted RHCC needs have been met, the Statewide RHCC Event Log shall be updated with statement that needs have been met to avoid duplication of efforts.
For all scenarios, once Impacted RHCC is able to operate without the borrowed resource(s), notice shall be made to the Assisting RHCC, the VDH Hospital Coordinator, and the VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness.		

---

[1] Assisting RHCCs shall provide logistical support whenever possible to reduce the impact on the Impacted RHCC.
[2] Statewide logistical support may be available when an event impacts multiple regions.

RHCC Assistance Directly to Facilities Outside Region

It is recognized that corporate ownership of healthcare facilities may span multiple RHCC regions. In certain events (e.g., large facility evacuation, power outage, etc.), requests of RHCC resources (e.g., transport assets, ventilators, etc.) from an unaffected region may be requested to an affected facility in another RHCC region through corporate contacts.

Coalition Resources from one RHCC region shall not be sent directly to any facility in an affected RHCC region. When possible, RHCCs should work with healthcare facilities in their region on providing resources outside of their region to avoid duplication of efforts. Additionally, notification of the affected region's RHCC shall be made as soon as practical to advise of the request. In some cases, adequate resources may be available in the affected facility's region without need for resources traversing other regions.

All such requests and resources deployed shall be posted in the VHASS Event Module – Statewide RHCC Event Log. If VHASS is unavailable, other notification means including e-mail, phone calls, or text messages are acceptable, however such requests should be entered into VHASS at earliest convenience for tracking purposes.

Internal Corporate or MOU-Initiated Requests without RHCC Involvement

In certain events or conditions, facilities may initiate requests for assistance utilizing internal corporate emergency plans and/or inter-facility memorandums of understanding (MOUs) without direct notification of the RHCC. This may include the movement of supplies, equipment, or patients between affected facilities in one RHCC region to another RHCC region.

If such a situation occurs, RHCCs in sending and receiving regions should be notified as soon as the situation is discovered to maintain full situational awareness.

1. If the affected region's RHCC is aware of equipment/supply movement or patient relocation to other regions, they shall make notifications to all RHCC regions receiving such assistance or patient relocation as soon as practical.

2. If a region's RHCC is made aware of equipment/supply movement or patient relocation into their region from another RHCC region, they shall make notifications to all RHCC regions sending such assistance or relocated patients as soon as practical.

Recovery

Following stabilization or conclusion of the event, notice shall be made to any Assisting RHCC(s) that the event has been stabilized and arrangements made for the return of any borrowed equipment. Notice shall also be made to the VDH Hospital Coordination and the VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness. Supplies shall be replaced on a one-for-one basis following the process listed under Renumeration.

After-Action Reports/Improvement Plans (AAR/IP)

It is expected that an AAR/IP shall be completed following the activation of this plan.

For single region, non-ongoing events the Impacted RHCC Manager is responsible for completing the AAR/IP. Input should be collected from the Assisting RHCC(s), the VHHA Director of Emergency Preparedness, and the VDH State Hospital Coordinator and included in the AAR/IP.

For statewide or ongoing events, the Impacted RHCC Manager(s) shall document their requests and actions and provide such documentation to VDH and/or VHHA for inclusion in their statewide AAR/IP.

Appendices

Appendix A:
Key Contact Information

(RHCC Contact Information can be accessed on VHASS.org under "Regional Information")
(Full VHEMP Directory located on VHASS.org under "Admin")

Appendix B:
VHHA HPP Regions